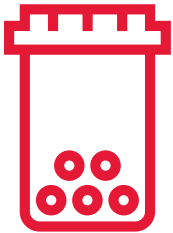


Pain Medications and You



The number of opioid pain relievers prescribed has quadrupled since 1999.¹ These prescriptions can be helpful for patients experiencing high levels of pain, such as post-surgery pain. When opioids are used for acute pain, doctors should prescribe the lowest dose and smallest amount to effectively manage the pain. Three days or less will often be sufficient; more than seven days will rarely be

needed. **This is why there are limits on the days' supply allowed for an acute prescription to a seven-day supply**, aligning coverage with the Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The limit has been created to encourage safe use and to help prevent acute use from becoming chronic.

Common Questions and Answers

Q: What should I do with any unused prescriptions?

A: Find your community take-back program. Many pharmacies now have medication disposal units. About half the medications obtained after a procedure aren't used, leaving extra medications in the home that can be misused.³

Q: What is the worst that can happen from taking opioids?

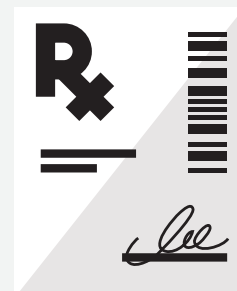
A: Patients are at risk of becoming addicted, leading to a higher risk for unintentional overdose or death. From 1999 to 2014, more than 165,000 people died from overdose related to prescription opioid pain relievers in the United States.⁴

Q: Is there anything else I can take instead or with my opioid pain reliever prescription so I'm not taking as much?

A: Talk to your doctor about other ways to manage your pain. Make sure you don't take your opioid pain relievers with medications such as Xanax® (alprazolam), Valium® (diazepam), Soma® (carisoprodol) and Ambien® (zolpidem). If you have questions about the combination of medications you're taking, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

Did you know?

About one-third of people who misused opioid pain relievers in the past year (36.4 percent) indicated they obtained pain relievers the last time through a prescription or health care provider.²



More than 40 people die every day from prescription opioid overdoses.⁴

1. HHS CDC NCIPC Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention. "Factsheet CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 14 Mar. 2016, www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/guidelines_at-a-glance-a.pdf, accessed January 3, 2018.
2. Lipari, Rachel N, and Arthur Hughes. "How People Obtain the Prescription Pain Relievers They Misuse." *The CBHSQ Report*, SAMHSA, 12 Jan. 2017, www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/report_2686/ShortReport-2686.html, accessed January 3, 2018.
3. Harris K, Curtis J, Larsen B, Calder S, Duffy K, Bowen G, Hadley M, and Tristani-Firouzi P. "Opioid pain medication use after dermatologic surgery: a prospective observational study of 212 dermatologic surgery patients." *JAMA Dermatol.*, Mar. 2013, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/23682368>, accessed January 3, 2018.
4. HHS CDC NCIPC Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention. "Factsheet CDC Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, 14 Mar. 2016, www.cdc.gov/drugoverdose/pdf/guidelines_at-a-glance-a.pdf, accessed January 3, 2018.

Your privacy is important to us. Our employees are trained regarding the appropriate way to handle your private health information. This document contains references to brand-name prescription drugs that are trademarks or registered trademarks of pharmaceutical manufacturers not affiliated with CVS Caremark®. This information is not a substitute for medical advice or treatment. Talk to your doctor or health care provider about this information and any health-related questions you have. CVS Caremark assumes no liability whatsoever for the information provided or for any diagnosis or treatment made as a result of this information.